

Nixon Will Retain Hoover and Helms

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 16—

J. Edgar Hoover, for 44 years the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Richard Helms, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, will remain in their present posts for at least the first year of the Nixon Administration.

At a news conference here this morning, Ronald Ziegler, the President-elect's press spokesman, announced that Mr. Nixon had talked personally with Mr. Helms and Mr. Hoover at his New York headquarters and had invited them to remain in Government. Both men, he said, had agreed to do so.

It was not clear how long they would remain in their jobs, Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon had not sought to impose time limits on the tenure of either man.

However, reports — which Nixon sources would not immediately confirm — began circulating that Mr. Hoover might remain only a year, retiring on or just before Jan. 1, 1970.

75th Birthday Ahead

This speculation was prompted in part by the fact that Jan. 1, 1970, will be Mr. Hoover's 75th birthday, which he may find a fitting moment on which to end his Government service.

The announcement was made in Federal Office Building 7, a relatively new Federal structure on 17th Street where part of the President-elect's staff has occupied office space during the transition period.

As Mr. Ziegler talked to news men on the second floor, Mr. Nixon conferred upstairs with Republican leaders, including Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois and Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, the Senate and House minority leaders.

Mr. Nixon's decision to keep Mr. Hoover follows a pattern set by his immediate predecessors. One of the first announcements made by John F. Kennedy after he became President in 1960 was that he had asked Mr. Hoover to remain.

Since Mr. Hoover is past the compulsory retirement age of 70 for Federal employees, Mr. Nixon, when he takes office, will have to sign an executive order exempting Mr. Hoover from retirement. President Johnson waived the rule when he reappointed Mr. Hoover.

Support for Helms

In asking Mr. Helms to stay on, Mr. Nixon has accepted the advice of his associates in his staff and on Capitol Hill who have come to regard the C.I.A.'s director as one of the Government's most able and effective servants.

A veteran of nearly two decades as the agency's deputy director, Mr. Helms assumed full command at the request of Mr. Johnson on June 18, 1966. Since then he has earned the reputation as a fair and honest reporter of intelligence data, who has focused on the primary business of information-gathering and kept clear of policy disputes.

He is viewed particularly in



J. Edgar Hoover



Richard Helms

Congress, where the intelligence agency has long been cause of controversy — as a reliable source of data on the war in Vietnam, and he has not been afraid to give assessments of the war contrary to those provided by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and even the White House.

In 1967, for example, his evaluation of the effects of the bombing was decidedly more critical than the Joint Chiefs', and his evaluations of enemy strength have, as a rule, been more pessimistic than those from other sources.

Mr. Hoover has also sought to remain above controversy but has been less successful in doing so. He is a bachelor who dresses conservatively, drinks and eats sparingly and expects his agents to do the same. He seldom gives interviews and remains aloof from Washington's official social circuit.

Despite his Spartan life, however, he speaks out frequently and forcefully in his agency's monthly Law Enforcement Bulletin against Communist influences in the United States, organized crime, civil disorder, and pornography.

A Campaign Issue

He has tangled publicly with civil rights leaders, and had a caustic exchange with the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During the campaign, Senator Eugene McCarthy publicly called for his removal.

Vice President Humphrey delicately sidestepped the question when asked whether he would retain Mr. Hoover. Of the major candidates only Mr. Nixon unequivocally pledged to keep the F.B.I. chief in his job.

At the same time, Mr. Hoover has developed a powerful esprit de corps among his agents, and under his leadership the F.B.I. has attempted to lift the business of fighting crime from an

amateur exercise to a professional discipline.

Meanwhile, authoritative sources confirmed that Mr. Nixon would shortly name Gov. Nils A. Boe of South Dakota as director of the Office of Emergency Planning. The office administers the President's contingency fund and coordinates Federal planning and assistance in times of national disaster, such as a major flood, hurricane, or earthquake.

In another development of the transition, John N. Mitchell, the Attorney General designate, spent an hour conferring with President Johnson this afternoon at Mr. Johnson's office in the White House. George Christian, the White House press secretary, declined to give any details of their conversation.

Mr. Christian said earlier today that the President would probably be seeing a number of the Nixon Cabinet members throughout this week at the request of the President-elect. Mr. Mitchell was the first.

The President-elect spent more than two hours with the Congressional leaders, then paid a call on former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who is recuperating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from a heart attack.

After the visit, Mr. Nixon told newsmen that the General would watch the wedding of his grandson, David, to Mr. Nixon's daughter Julie on a specially arranged closed-circuit television hookup.

"He will be the only individual, incidentally, other than those in the church, who will have a chance to see it — because this is not being telecast otherwise," Mr. Nixon reported.

The President-elect returned to New York late this afternoon to prepare for a round of appointments tomorrow.